2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

The influence of the deserts may be seen in Egyptian folk-tales, many of which tell of encounters there with *afārīt* and other supernatural beings. Secret caves in "the mountain," as the people call the steep, sometimes almost precipitous ascent to the high-desert plateau, also enter into the adventures recounted by the village story-tellers; these 'caves' are, of course, the ancient rock-hewn tomb-chapels with which the outer face of "the mountain" is in some places honeycombed (see Fig. 3).

Egypt is a land of contrasts, the marked difference between the very fertile Nile Valley and the arid, waterless deserts on either

FIG. 2. EDGE OF THE HIGH-DESERT PLATEAU, THE LOWER DESERT, AND IN THE DISTANCE THE CULTIVATION

side of it striking the eye of every visitor to the country. These physical features are, I think, reflected in the character of the peasants, for it is a remarkable fact that the most divergent traits of character can be seen in a single individual. The Egyptian peasants, in spite of much poverty and sickness, and with few amusements to break the monotony of their lives, are as a whole a wonderfully cheerful and contented people. They are very quick of comprehension, of ready wit, dearly loving a joke, even if directed against themselves, usually blessed with a retentive memory, light-hearted, kindly, and very hospitable; they are also very hard-working. At the same time they are very emotional, highly strung, most inflammable, generally very ignorant, and nearly always conspicuously lacking in self-control.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

Thus a man normally of a quiet, gentle, and peaceful disposition may on the spur of the moment commit some brutal murder. One year when I was staying in a small, out-of-the-way village in Upper Egypt a man killed a neighbour in a terrible way because he had stolen some onions from his (the murderer's) field. The moment after he had committed the crime he was weeping over the body of his victim!

One of the besetting sins of the Egyptian *fellāḥīn* is jealousy, which often becomes such a raging passion that a jealous man or

FIG. 3. THE FACE OF "THE MOUNTAIN" AND ENTRANCES TO ANCIENT TOMB-CHAPELS

woman is rendered capable of committing any violent crime. The women are liable to be jealous of one another's children, the wives about their husbands, the men of each other's prosperity or position, and so on to an endless degree. I do not wish to imply that jealousy is uncommon in other parts of the world, but I certainly think that it has a large share in the general make-up of the Egyptian character.

Again, the love of money tends to make them very avaricious, and is the cause of many serious troubles among them. On the other hand, they are capable of, and often actually perform, most generous actions, both in the giving of money and in the forgiveness of an injury. Quarrels between individuals, occasionally very violent ones, are common in the villages, but if a judicious

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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my *barakeh*. I am happy to say that in both cases the performance was crowned with success!

I have already mentioned that the peasants appear to believe that ancient things are specially endowed with *barakeh*, and that on that account they may be efficacious in curing childless women of their barrenness. On the site of an ancient temple in Middle Egypt is a pool of water in which large inscribed stones are partly submerged, while others lie on the ground close by. The site is

FIG. 49. WOMEN PERAMBULATING THE POOL ON THE SITE OF AN ANCIENT TEMPLE

called *el-Kenīseh* (the Church) by the peasants, probably because it became known that it is the site of an ancient temple. This pool is believed to possess miraculous powers, and every Friday childless women flock thither from all the surrounding villages. They clamber over the stones on the edge of the pool and also over those which are partly submerged, performing this somewhat arduous feat three times, and going more or less in a circular direction (Fig. 49). After this they hope to conceive.

Curiously enough, women come to this spot and act in the same manner to prevent conception. On the occasion of my visit to the pool one of the women who was there told me that she had come for this latter purpose. She did not want to have another child for some time, as she had one or two very young children living

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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and from the excavations of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft at el-'Amarneh.[1] The shifting of the boundary-stone (pp. 169f.) is condemned in *The Teaching of Amenōphis, the Son of Kanakht.*[2]

FA [285] [192]

FIG. 176. A MODERN (LEFT) AND ANCIENT (RIGHT) BASKET
The latter after H. E. Winlock, *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*, Part II (December, 1922), p. 35, Fig. 24.

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The modern plough (p. 170 and Fig. 97) is almost exactly like the ancient one (see Fig. 178).[3] For a drawing of an ancient plough reconstructed from still surviving portions see Fig. 179. Dr Borchardt thinks that the ancient like the modern plough was furnished with a metal share. Accordingly the wooden share in Fig. 179 is represented as sheathed in metal. Dr B. P. Grenfell told my brother that the blade of the *ṭūriyeh* (hoe) had acquired its present shape, and was already made of iron, by Roman times, for he had found such blades in rubbish mounds of the Roman period.

A [286] [532]

G [407]

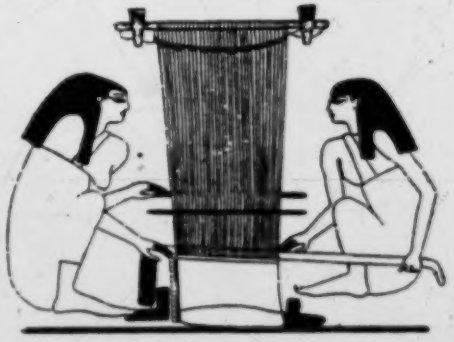

FIG. 177. TWO WOMEN WEAVING ON A HORIZONTAL LOOM
After F. Cailliaud, *Recherches sur les arts et les métiers*, Pl. 27A.

The modern *shādūf* (pp. 170 f.) finds its exact counterpart in

A [113]

[1] *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft zu Berlin*, vol. I, p. 17. For a photograph showing a modern cultivated patch of ground so divided, see G. Steindorff, *Die Blütezeit des Pharaonenreichs* (Leipzig, 1926), Fig. 54.

[2] F. Ll. Griffith, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, vol. xii, p. 204.

[3] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, Pl. 35; A. Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, translated by H. M. Tirard (London, 1894), p. 426; J. G. Wilkinson, *The Ancient Egyptians*, vol. i, p. 281; L. Borchardt, *Priestergräber . . . vom Totentempel des*

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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×539 And when ye sing: "O Moḥammed!",
782 Go ye and come ye [— O Moḥammed].
But whoever fails to say: "O Moḥammed!",
Will lie, some morning, slain [— O Moḥammed],
In the bean-field, [— O Moḥammed].
He and his mother and the wife of his uncle!
[O Moḥammed].

1—4. Invocation of the Prophet Moḥammed.

2. "By Allah" is used to confirm the truth of what follows in the song.

[792] 3. Rāma is, according to Maḥmûd, a name of the mother of the Prophet.

5. Addressed to companions.

[192] [776] 8. "Go ye and come ye" is, of course, to be completed with: bis-salāme, "in safety" The road to the excavations is often long and the peasant-boy's imagination pictures ḥarāmiye (thieves) and 'afārit (evil spirits) lurking about everywhere. There is, in Cairo, a proverb, which runs: kullē ḫarâbe welina fiha 'afrit, "In every ruined house there lurks for us an evil spirit." In order to understand this proverb, it is necessary to remember, that in the native quarters of oriental cities, [362] [172] half or totally ruined houses are a much more frequent sight than with us. Moreover, Abu Gūrâb (the ruin of the sun-temple, see page II) before our excavations, was regarded as full of evil spirits.

[241] [262] 11. In the spring, wide stretches of land are covered with the tall fûl plant or hog's bean. In Egypt this bean is an important element in the nourishment of man and beast. *Compare No. M, 1. 2.*

12. He involves with him in his ruin, even his dearest relatives.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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● 172
482
415

Photograph by L. Borchardt.

At the Work of Excavation.

The Boys with their Rubbish-Baskets. (Excavations at Abuṣîr.)